Rural District Council of Ulverston.

ANNUAL

REPORT

OF

Medical Officer of Health.

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1898.

ULVERSTON :

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RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF ULVERSTON.

Beckside House,
Dalton-in-Furness,
January, 1899.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Gentlemen,

It is my duty as your Medical Officer of Health, to present a report of the sanitary condition of the district at the end of each year, but seeing that I have held the appointment for the latter half of the year only, the information gained from personal observation can only refer to this period; for the first half of the twelve months I shall have to be indebted to your Clerk and Inspectors, for any assistance which they can afford me.

Area of District 128,927 acres.
Population (Enumerated 1891) 18,773.
do. (Estimated 1898) 18,773.

Population.—As the population in this district is not subject to very great variations I shall base the whole of my calculations on the census population (as enumerated) in 1891.

Inspection of the District.—In cases of Infectious Disease or where reports of sanitary defects have been received the district has been subject to regular inspection, but it is not possible to organize anything approaching systematic inspection with such a small staff of Inspectors, and I sincerely hope that the report of the Sub-Committee which has been elected for the purpose of taking into consideration this question, amongst others, will contain a recommendation for an increased staff.

Sanitary Condition and Progress.—Water supply.—The water supply, as in all rural districts, is from various sources, shallow-wells, springs, deep-wells, and open runners, and in many instances liable to periodic pollution.

The supply to Much and Little Urswick, about which so much has been heard, is to be taken from a private main, negotiations having been completed for the purchase of the same, and it is a matter for congratulation that these villages, which, undoubtedly, were in great need of a proper supply, should have had their requirements satisfied, and it may be regarded as quite practicable to extend the benefits derivable from this source to the neighbouring villages of Skeldon Moor, Scales, Stainton and Gleaston.

Plans have been approved and tenders let for the provision of a water supply to Backbarrow. For the village of Chappels (Kirkby) a scheme is under contemplation.

With regard to the village of Allithwaite, the Council will be aware that an inquiry has been addressed to the Urban District Council of Grange with a view to entering into an arrangement by which water may be obtained from their mains.

In the case of Broughton-in-Furness, it is a matter of regret, that a supply for this town should be left to the initiative of a private company, as I feel that it is very desirable that all such schemes should emanate from and be under the control of the Council as the health authority of the district.

Having regard to the character of Coniston as a health and pleasure resort I am bound to say that it is desirable that a supply from one source should be available for the whole of the town, for, although I was unable to find any signs of pollution in the various samples which have been taken for analysis, still it adds very greatly to the difficulty of investigating outbreaks of infectious diseases when the water supply is obtained from such a multitude of sources. As a general principle I would urge that a supply by gravitation should be the ideal to strive for in all cases.

Egton-with-Newland.—I cannot but express my regret that advantage was not taken of the offer of Miss Machell, to bear a heavy part of the financial burden consequent upon the adoption of a general supply to the village of Pennybridge, and I would urge the Council to undertake, at an early date, the consideration of that question, and would suggest that the neighbouring village of Greenodd be included in the scheme of a general supply.

Hawkshead.—The water supply of Hawkshead is generally highly satisfactory. There seems to be a desire on the part of the townspeople to have the water in their houses for the purpose of flushing W.C's., but it is a matter for grave consideration whether it would be wise to introduce a general system of W.C's., in view of the difficulty in dealing with the sewage effluent.

Sewerage and Drainage:

Leece.—The sewerage scheme for this village, which was commenced in the summer is now completed and the house connections have been made. Three nine inch mains, with six inch branches have been laid with a fall of not less than 1 in 240 towards a settling tank fitted with chain pump, the effluent from the tank is conducted to a series of sluice pots and is distributed intermittently on to prepared land for irrigation.

Greenodd.—An extension of this sewer has been laid.

Wall End (Kirkby).—A scheme of sewerage for this hamlet is in contemplation with outfall directly into the sea.

Cross-a-Moor.—The sewer has been extended and reconstructed, a tank and pump provided, the effluent running on to the land.

Much Urswick.—A new sewer has to be laid at this village and tenders have been accepted for the work. I think it is desirable that the whole village should be provided with some means of sewage disposal.

Gleaston.—This village is dreadfully in need of some method of sewage disposal; at the present time the greater part of the sewage from dwellings and farm buildings simply runs along the surface, and at times great nuisance arises therefrom; such a conditition of affairs cannot but be prejudicial to the public health.

Newbiggin.—The hamlet under this name, must be kept under the notice of the Council, the recent outbreak of Typhoid Fever there revealed the fact that the sanitary conditions prevailing were anything but satisfactory.

Cark and Cartmel.—These two villages are much in need of some scheme of sewage disposal and the question must of necessity shortly engage the attention of the Authority.

Bardsea.—A recent inspection of this village disclosed an unsatisfactory state of affairs as regards much of the property and many drains require attention, but special mention will be made of this in the ordinary monthly report.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births.—There have been 418 Births registered during the year, which produces a Birth-rate of 22·2 per 1000; in the previous year there were 444 births, with a birth rate of 23·93 per 1000.

According to districts the Births have had the following distribution :—

	Births.	Popul.	Rate per 1000.
Broughton West	67	3021	22·1
Cartmel ...	105	4586	22·8
Colton ...	64	3270	19·5
Dalton (Rural)	52	2425	21·4
Hawkshead ...	72	3301	21·8
Ulverston (Rural)	58	2170	26·9
Totals	418	18,773	

In the	first	quarter	of the year	103
,,	second	,,	,,	97
,,	third	,,	,,	110
,,	fourth	,,	,,	108
			Total	418

There have been 220 male children born and 198 females.

Illegitimate Births.—There have been 12 male illegitimate children born and 11 females.

Deaths.—The Deaths recorded during the past year have numbered 240 or 12·7 per 1000, compared with 228 or 12. per 1000 for the year 1897. Tabulated according to the several parts of the district in which they arose we find the following distribution :—

	Deaths-	Popul.	Death rate per 1000
Broughton West	43	3021	14·2
Cartmel ...	51	4586	11·1
Colton ...	42	3270	12·8
Dalton (Rural)	21	2425	8.7
Hawkshead ...	47	3301	14·2
Ulverston (Rural)	36	2170	16·5
Total	240	18,773	

There have been 130 deaths in males and 110 in females.

In	the first	quarter of	the year	there were 74
,,	second	,,	,,	64
,,	third	,,	,,	45
,,	fourth	,,	,,	57
			Total	240

Diseases of the Respiratory Organs.—Twenty-nine deaths have been registered as being due to Bronchitis and Pneumonia, and fourteen to Phthisis (Consumption of the Lungs.)

Zymotic.—Death Rate.—This is a term applied commonly, not to the mortality from all diseases classed as Zymotic but to the death-rate from the "seven principal Zymotic Diseases" namely, Small Pox, Measles, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, "Fever" (Typhus, Simple Continued and Typhoid), and Diarrhœa, From diseases of this type I find there have been 12 deaths, as against 11 in 1897, giving a zymotic death-rate of ·63 per 1000; these have had the following distribution:—

	Zymotic Diseases.	Population.	Zymotic Death Rate.
Broughton West	0	3021	·00
Cartmel ...	2	4586	·43
Colton ...	0	3270	·00
Dalton (Rural) ...	3	2425	1·2
Hawkshead ...	5	3301	1·5
Ulverston (Rural)	2	2170	·9
	12	18,773	

	Scarlet Fever	Typhus Fever	Typhoid Fever	Diphtheria	Whooping Cough	Diarrhœa	Total
Broughton West	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cartmel ...	...	...	...	...	2	...	2
Colton ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dalton ...	...	...	2	...	...	1	3
Hawkshead ...	1	...	...	3	...	1	5
Ulverston ...	...	*1	...	1	...	...	2
Totals ...	1	1	2	4	2	2	12

* This case of Typhus died in the High Carley Hospital, and came from the Broughton West District.

Infectious Diseases Notification Act.—I have received the following notifications of Infectious Diseases classified according to the districts from which they were returned:—

	Scarlet Fever	Erysipelas	Diphtheria	Typhoid Fever	Typhus Fever	Totals	Population	Rate per 1000
Broughton West	4	1		14	1	20	3021	6·6
Cartmel ...	1		1	2		4	4586	0·8
Colton ...	2	2				4	3270	1·2
Dalton (Rural)...	1			7		8	2425	3·2
Hawkshead ...	7	5	5	2		19	3301	5·7
Ulverston(Rural)		2	3	2		7	2170	3·2
Totals ...	15	10	9	27	1	62	18773	3·2
1897	34	9	8	10	0	61	18773	3·2

From the foregoing it will be observed that there has been no extensive prevalence of Epidemic or Endemic Diseases.

Measles.—This disease which is not notified, prevailed to such an extent at Lindale-in-Cartmel that it was considered wise to order the closure of the Schools for a short period, in this case no doubt the disease was contracted from Grange where there was an extensive prevalance at the same time, otherwise your district has been singularly free from visitations of Measles.

Typhoid Fever.—It will be seen from the above table that nearly three times as many cases of this disease have been reported as in 1897, the cases arose in a sporadic manner, the Broughton district giving the highest figures.

I shall, at a later stage of my report, deal with all the cases that have come under my observation, where I have had an opportunity of making an inspection of the premises, but I must here observe that it is a regrettable feature in the sanitary history of your district that there should be so many cases of a disease which is essentially due to defective sanitation, and is probably above all others preventable when such defects are remedied ; my own experience of its occurrence in rural districts leads me to believe that the majority of scattered cases are due to the poisoning of air, drinking water, or food with decomposing filth, it is rarely transmitted by direct infection from one person to another, the discharges from the bowels being the usual means of transmission, and when these find their way into the air, drinking water, or food, especially milk, they may operate with terrible force.

So far as I have been able to observe, the privy accommodation in many parts of your district is very faulty, consisting either of a delapidated stone or wooden structure with an excavation at the rear to receive the excreta, or a deep leaky uncovered ashpit which is always more or less a nuisance.

I do not say that a properly constructed and perfectly water-tight privy when not too near the dwelling is the same danger to health in rural as in crowded urban districts, indeed it is in the country frequently the only method of excrement disposal which is practicable, but, when we are aware that there is a danger in their presence, we must make it our duty, as guardians of the public health, to see that they are properly constructed and regularly emptied.

In the table below will be found the result of the inspection of premises where the disease was reported to exist.

	No. of cases	
June.		
1, Goad St., Swarthmoor	1	No sanitary defects.
July.		
Newbiggin, Aldingham	1	General sanitary defects, polluted well.
August.		
High Cross, Broughton	1	No defects.
Skeldon Moor, Urswick	1	Cottages all drain into Beck
October.		
Foxfield Villas... ...	1	Defective drains, water liable to pollution.
November.		
Gleaston Mill... ...	2	Sanitary defects general, 1 died
Windhill, Scales ...	1	Polluted water, defective drains (died).
December.		
Waytham Hill, Foxfield	2	Drain under kitchen leaking, farm buildings all undrained
Main St., Flookburgh...	1	Delapidated privy, piggery offensive.
Broughton-in-Furness ...	1	Imported.
The Grove, Woodland	1	Water supply suspicious.

Scarlet Fever.—This disease has arisen only in isolated instances, fifteen notifications having been received, whereas there were thirty-four during the year 1897.

I trust that the public will be disposed to take advantage of the Isolation Hospitals, in cases of Scarlet Fever, as with prompt removal to Hospital and disin-

fection of houses we may hope to check the spread of infection; without this it is almost impossible to prevent the occasional appearance of the disease in an epidemic form where there is to be found a susceptible community, so powerful, volatile and persistent is the contagion. Isolation in the cottage houses of the working classes is impossible, besides which we find mothers extremely careless in exposing sufferers in public places during the infective period.

Diphtheria.—I have had nine reports of cases of this disease the chief incidence being in the Hawkshead registration district, viz: at Coniston, from which village five cases of Diphtheria or Membranous Croup, which for all practical purposes we may class as the same disease, were notified in the Autumn. Besides those actually notified, I had to investigate a very large number of cases of sore throat, undoubtedly of an infectious character.

I was unable to discover any cause for the orginal outbreak, the water supply was quite pure as proved by analysis and there was no reason to suspect the milk; one has, therefore, only the drainage to fall back upon, and at Coniston this cannot be said to be altogether satisfactory. The motto appears to have been "Every man his own Sanitary Engineer" the consequence being that there is a number of systems of sewage disposal but for the most part this ultimately finds its way either directly or indirectly into the stream which traverses the village, and many complaints were made as to the stench arising from some of the outlets. After the first case had arisen there is little doubt but that the others were due in the majority of instances to direct infection communicated from Scholar to Scholar at the Schools and so obviously was this the case that the Managers very wisely decided to close the Schools.

This outbreak, together with the knowledge that this particular part of the district has not had the best of reputations during the past in a sanitary sense, will, it is to be hoped stir up the Authority to face its responsibilies in the near future and carry out a perfect scheme of sewerage and sewage disposal for Coniston.

Joint Hospital Board.—I must, in conclusion, congratulate the Council upon the formation of the Joint Hospital Board which is one of the most distinctive marks of progress of the year and I am hopeful that before long full advantage will be taken of the hospital accommodation provided by the Board, by those who are subjected to infectious diseases.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

G. H. PATTERSON,

L.R.C.P., Lond., M.R.C.S., Eng. D.P.H., Lond.,

Medical Officer of Health.

Jan. 30th, 1899.

ULVERSTON :

Hume Kitchin, Printer, Market Street.